

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8-11 and 14-20 are pending in the present application, with Claims 1 and 5 being independent. Claims 1 and 5 are amended to more clearly recite the features of the present invention. Claims 17-20 are newly added. Support for the amendments and new claims can be found in the specification at least at page 10, line 13-15 and in the Figures. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added by the amendments herein.

Claims 1-2, 4 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly obvious over McLeod (EP 0 355 422 A) in view of Nakaya (JP 9-263075 A). Claims 5-6, 8 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly obvious over McLeod in view of Skees (EP 0 726 164 A2) and Nakamura (JP 7-61170 A). Claims 9-11 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly obvious over McLeod in view of Skees and Nakamura and further in view of Hirano et al. (JP 10-6594). Applicant respectfully disagrees with these rejections as applied to the present claims.

Before addressing the merits of the rejections, Applicant believes it will be helpful to review some features and advantages of the present invention. The present invention, as recited in Claim 1, relates to printing paper comprising a center portion having a rectangular form having two pairs of opposite sides connected by four corners, and a pair of outside portions connected to the center portion at one pair of the two pairs of opposite sides of the center portion.

The outside portions are an edge portion of the printing paper and are removed from the center portion after an image is formed on the center portion. The other pair of the two pairs of opposite sides of the center portion are not connected to any other printing paper. At least one of the center portion and the pair of outside portions are formed so that the four corners of the center portion have a round shape after removing the outside portions from the center portion.

The present invention, as recited in independent Claim 5, also relates to a label printing paper comprising an image receiving layer releasably laminated on a supporting layer, the label printing paper having a center portion having a rectangular form having two pairs of opposite sides connected by four corners and a pair of outside portions connected to the center portion at one pair of the two pairs of opposite sides of the center portion. The outside portions are an edge portion of the printing paper and are removed from the center portion after an image is formed on the center portion. The other pair of the two pairs of opposite sides of the center portion are not connected to any other label printing paper. At least one of the center portion and the pair of outside portions are formed so that the four corners of the center portion have a round shape after removing the outside portions from the center portion.

The printing paper and label printing paper according to the present invention have outside portions as both edge portions. Therefore, it is not necessary to consider the direction of the printing paper when setting it in a printing apparatus. This results in a printing paper that can be handled easily (see page 11, lines 12-15). Moreover, the outside portions are an edge portion of the printing paper, and the outside portions do not connect with another printing paper, which means that the printing paper is an independent, separate sheet. Therefore, the

problem of curling that occurs with a rolled continuous printing paper does not arise. In addition, the number of cutting operations required for obtaining a final printed product is decreased. The present invention also provides the advantage that since the corners of the center portion (after removing the outside portions) have a round shape, the paper is easily put in a holder such as a purse, pocket notebook or the like. In Applicant's view, the cited references do not teach or suggest the claimed invention.

McLeod discloses a sheet wherein outside portions are edge portions of the sheet and are two sides facing each other, and wherein no outside portions of the center portion connect with another printing paper. However, as the Examiner recognizes, the four corners of the sheet disclosed in McLeod are angular (not rounded). Applicant notes that this structure corresponds to printing paper designated in this application as already known.

Nakaya is cited for teaching this feature; it discloses a card having four rounded corners and that is cut off from a delivery medium. The goal of this invention is to shorten the time required for a banking process. The card disclosed in Nakaya is used for money transfer, and the delivery medium is a post card which is much larger than the card. Applicant understands that in Nakaya, at least one side of the two sides of the card facing each other (center portion) always connects with another print paper (delivery medium). This relationship between the center portion and the outside portions is different from that of McLeod. In Applicant's view, it would not have been obvious, or even logical, to identify the outside portion of Nakaya, which is a post card, with the outside portion of the present invention or with the outside portion of McLeod, which is used for gripping the printing paper during image formation. Applicant

concludes that one of skill in the art would not have been motivated to combine Nakaya and McLeod. The different technical fields and goals of Nakaya versus McLeod also make it improper to combine these two references to arrive at the present invention.

Similarly, Skees (which is cited against Claims 5, 6, 8 and 18 in combination with McLeod and Nakaya) teaches a card having four rounded corners and that is cut off from a delivery medium. Again, the delivery medium as disclosed in Skees is much larger than the card, and Applicant understands that at least one side of the two sides of the card facing each other (center portion) always connects with another print paper (delivery medium). As in Nakaya, this relationship between the center portion and the outside portions is different from that of McLeod, and one of skill in the art would not have been motivated to combine Skees and McLeod.

Nakamura teaches removing a card having four rounded corners from a mount. The mount as disclosed in Nakamura is much larger than the card, and, as Applicant understands it, at least one side of the two sides of the card facing each other (center portion) always connects with another print paper (delivery medium). As in Nakaya and Skees, this relationship between the center portion and outside portions is different from that of McLeod, and similarly, one would not have been motivated to combine Nakamura and McLeod.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that it would not have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to arrive at all the features of Claims 1 and 5 from the teachings of McLeod, Nakaya, Skees and Nakamura, taken either singly or in the combinations proposed by the Examiner.

Hirano et al. is cited, in combination with McLeod, Skees and Nakamura, against printing process Claims 9 and 10 and printing system Claims 11 and 14. The Examiner has cited Hirano et al. with respect to the feeding device, print head and rollers. As Applicant understands it, Hirano et al. does not teach or suggest anything about cutting off a print paper, and hence, Hirano et al. does not remedy the deficiencies of the combination of McLeod, Skees and Nakamura. Also, it appears to Applicant that in Hirano et al., the print paper is in the form of a roll. Accordingly, Applicant concludes that the features of instant Claims 9-11 and 14 are not obvious over the cited references.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that the present invention, as recited in independent Claims 1 and 5, is patentably defined over the cited references, whether taken singly or in the combinations proposed by the Examiner. The dependent claims are also submitted to be patentable for the reasons given regarding independent Claims 1 and 5, as well as for the patentable features recited therein. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is requested.

Applicant believes that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration, withdrawal of the rejections and issuance of an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should be directed to our address listed below.

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